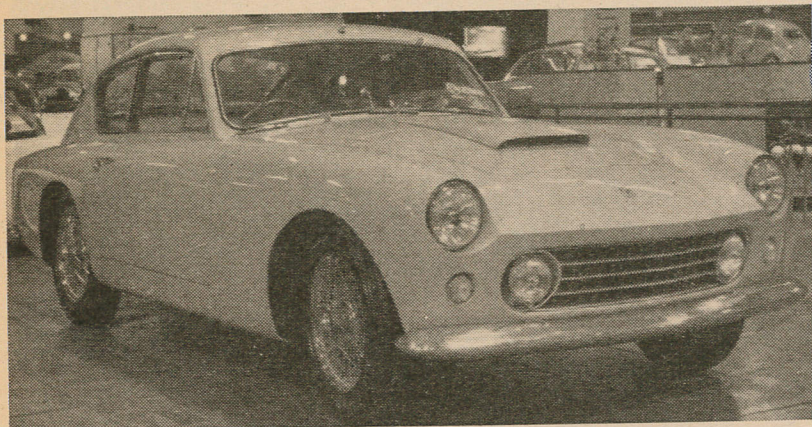


CARS WE

In Australia we have a good selection of cars from which to choose, but there are still plenty which have never found their way to our shores.



AC Greyhound is a fast four seater saloon. Other models in the same range include a two seater coupe and an open roadster called the Ace.



The SAAB Gran Turismo is probably the most completely equipped car in the world. Safety belts, average speed indicator are standard.

ALTHOUGH there are more than 40 different car brand names on the Australian market, we are far from having a complete representation of the vehicles of the world.

The reasons many of the cars which, on paper at least, seem interesting are many. One big factor is that most are not made in right hand drive and the manufacturers see no reason to go to the expense of producing them for the limited market they would find in places like Australia, New Zealand and the UK.

Another reason is that manufacturers are not prepared to sell their cars overseas unless they can be backed by a good service and parts organisation which, to say the least, is expensive in relation to a doubtful return.

Other companies have so much on their plate that they just are not prepared to expand further.

Another problem is the high import duties on cars which come into the country fully built up. Thus, cheap family cars become highly expensive when sold in competition to the machines of comparable quality built locally.

Some of the most exciting cars—the ones we dream about, but probably never even see—are in limited production and either stay in their home land or get exported to a dollar country.

Of course, we see very few cars from behind the Iron Curtain with notably exception of the Czechoslovakian-made Skoda which sells cheaply in Australia because the factory is subsidised by the government (their government, that is, not ours).

A great number of English cars never find their way to the Southern Hemisphere because they are only in limited production and would cost far too much to bring out.

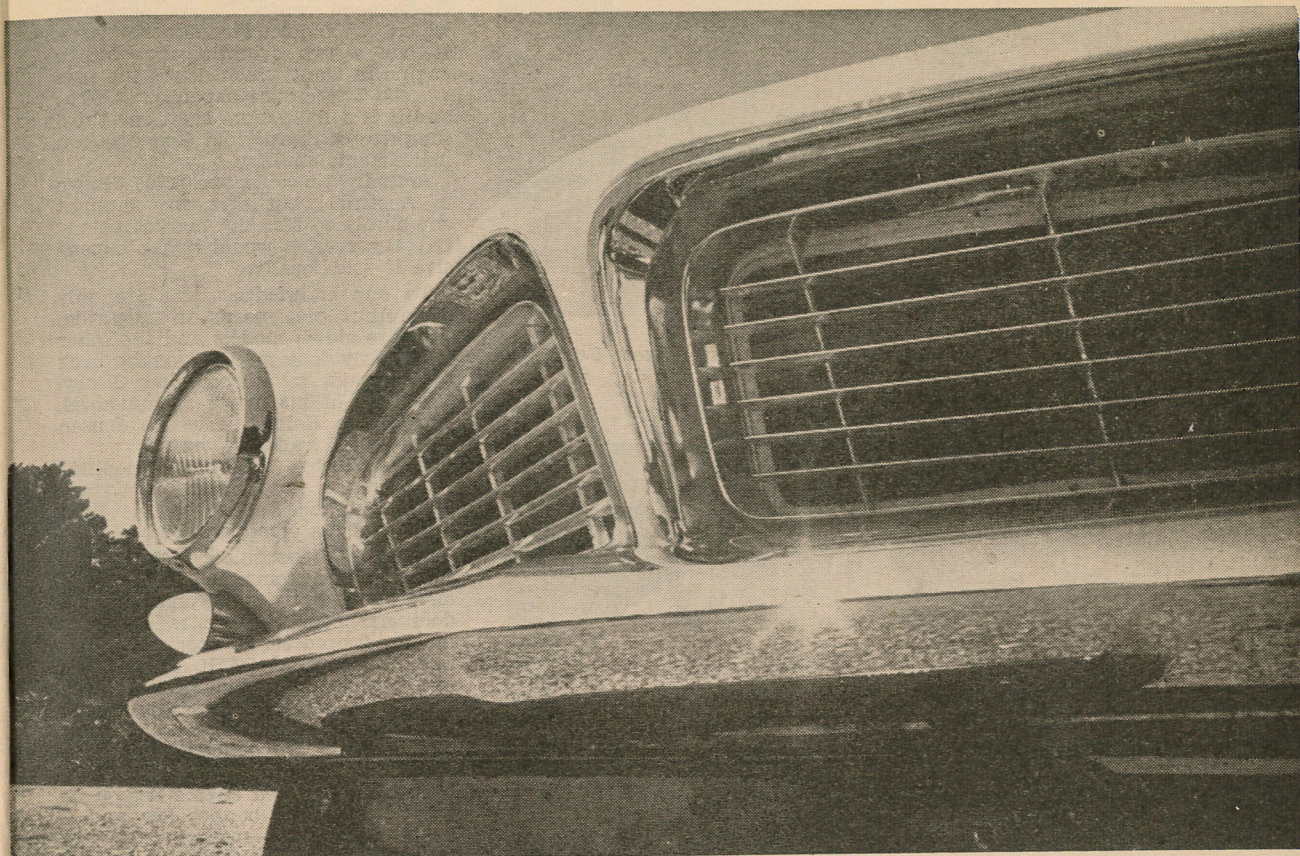
Only the biggest firms can afford to set up their own factories for assembly or manufacture in Australia and that is the reason why we see mostly the very popular English and European makes on our road.

Even cars which are a familiar make and assembled locally, are sold overseas in forms we never see. For instance, there is the Humber Super Snipe station wagon and its kissing-cousin, the Hawk wagon. In Australia, Humbers are sold only as saloons. They are assembled in Melbourne.

I recently saw what appeared to be a Hillman with a different radiator grille. The name plate told me it was a Humber—in New Zealand, Hillmans get a new grille and name plate and cash in on the prestige value of the big Humbers.

NEVER SEE

By IAN FRASER



The BMW 507 sports car — a completely unknown face on the Australian scene — does 140 mph and costs as much as a Rolls-Royce or Bentley.

A handful of lucky Australians have acquired AC sports cars, but only through importing them privately or bringing them back from a visit overseas. AC has been making cars since the 'twenties. The more recent versions either have their own six cylinder engine or the Bristol power unit, the latter providing considerably more performance. Suspension is independent all round and the body style can be either a streamlined coupe called the Aceca or the Ace roadster.

High performance and good handling for either fast road use or club competition are the keynote of these cars. There is also a very fast, streamlined, two door, four seater called the Greyhound.

Although Alfa Romeo is not entirely unknown in Australia, most people connect the name with either racing or sports/racing cars or high performance roadsters. These days, however, this Italian company also make a range of four door saloons as well as the very sporting cars they built their name on.

Performance is a tradition with

Alfa Romeo and even the commercial vehicles they make have twin overhead camshaft engines and above average acceleration.

The little Giulietta saloons have engines of only 1300 cc capacity, but they will do more than 90 mph with ease. Whilst these cars may have special appeal to the family man, the Giulietta sports cars are highly suitable for anything from road racing to shopping tours. Alfa has thoughtfully offered a wide range of body shapes, weights, engine powers and thus performance. Highly tuned, a Giulietta will do 120 mph.

Over the past year there has been a great deal of discussion about Auto Union/DKW models being sold in Australia. They are very popular in their home country, Germany, and in other parts of Europe. Their two-stroke engines have three cylinders in line, water cooled, driving the front wheels. A couple of purely sample models have come to Australia, but in their fully built-up form they would cost more than £1200. Against this, however, they are very lively

little cars and beautifully made as only the Germans can.

When someone mentions French cars people almost instinctively think of Renault and Citroen, but I wonder how many people realise that one French firm makes cars which rival Rolls-Royce and Bentley for quality. The Facel Vega is a highly expensive, high performance saloon, powered by a big V/8 Chrysler engine, tuned and refined for added smoothness. They are made in several body styles including a four door saloon.

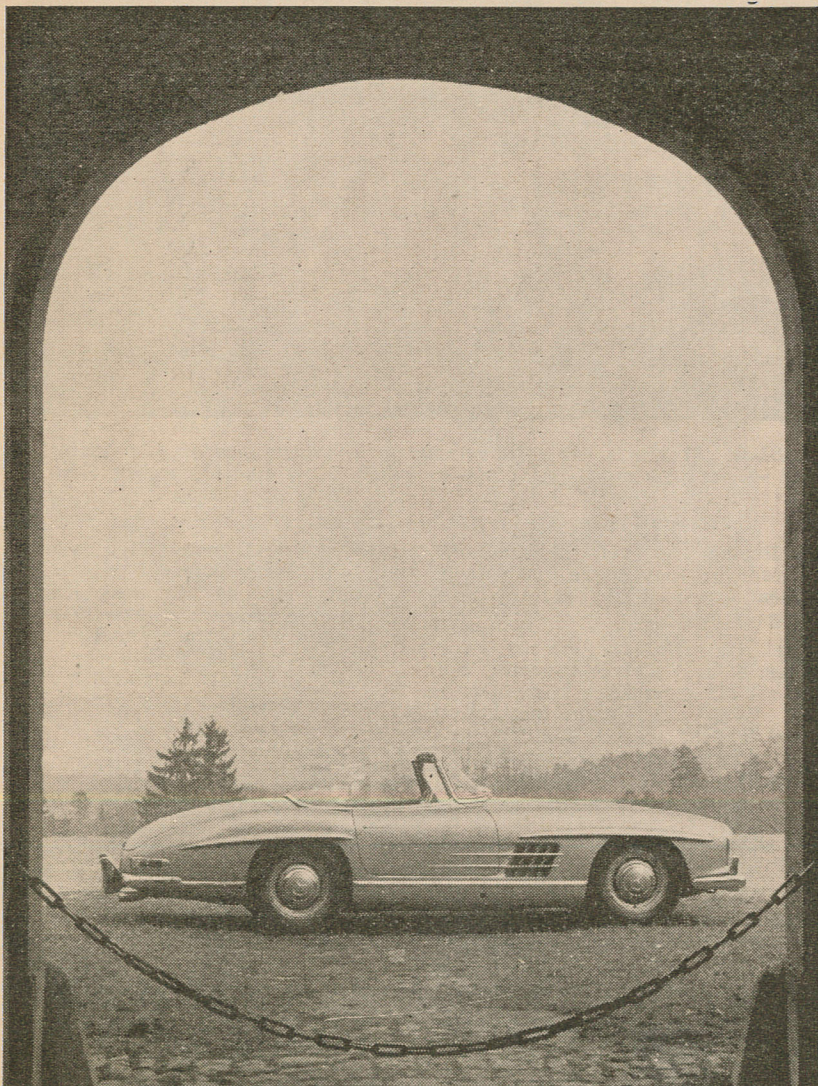
Not to be outdone by other people who make small, luxury sports cars, the Facel concern also makes 1.6-litre cars with twin overhead camshaft engines of their own manufacture. Both cars cost a great deal of money, but they are certainly among the finest money can buy.

By the way, the Facel Vega two door saloon must be one of the fastest four seater cars in the world. It has a top speed in excess of 140 mph, considerably beating all the other luxury cars in the class.

A German car we don't hear much about unfortunately is the BMW



Rivalling anything in the world for luxury transport, the Facel Vega is of French origin. It also has terrific performance for big car.



Because the engine is on its side in the Mercedes-Benz 300SL, it can not be made with right hand drive. It is the most expensive Mercedes.

Production is small and the price is high. They make cars ranging from four door saloons (the most popular and inexpensive) to two seater sports cars which do 140 mph and sell for as much as an Aston Martin DB4.

There has been some talk that these cars will one day be sold in Australia, but so far nothing has eventuated for certain.

A household name—largely through the efforts of the little Dart — the Goggomobil comes in another form which is completely unknown here. It has a two cylinder, four stroke engine in front which drives the rear wheels. The engine capacity is 700 cc and it is a little more than one-third the price of the normal Goggo saloon in its home country.

Actually there is one T700 Goggo in Australia, but that was brought out purely to test the market potential. However, it would be too expensive if sold locally.

To our knowledge there are only a handful of Jensens in Australia. Two are oldish models and the other is a fairly late model brought back to Australia by author Jon Cleary. The hero of his motor racing novel, *The Green Helmet*, drives a Jensen as personal transport, by the way.

Powered by a 4-litre, modified BMC engine, the Jensen has a stack of performance, aided by the light weight of its fibreglass body.

Mercedes-Benz saloons and 190SL roadsters are common-place on the local scene, but the one model which does not come to Australia is the much admired 300SL sports car. Unlike the original 300SL coupe, this one has doors in the ordinary way and is generally conventional. It comes either as a coupe or a soft top roadster. If you could get it in Australia it would cost nearly £7000.

The fuel-injected engine lies on its side to keep the bonnet low and it has a claimed top speed in excess of 145 mph. It is a highly refined vehicle.

The original Mercedes 300SL was a coupe with butterfly doors. The passengers had to step over the high side, then bring part of the roof down after them. However, at that stage the Germans were after increased export sales and the 300SL did not fulfil the registration requirements of some of the American States. The police claimed that it would be impossible to get out of one should it turn over. They were right, too.

The big drawback of the engine-on-its-side layout is that the steering must be left hand drive. Several attempts have been made to convert them over, but the efforts did not meet with the approval of Mercedes since it involved numerous universal joints.

BMC makes a strange little car called the Metropolitan. Originally it was made as a baby Nash by the BMC organisation in England, then exported to the United States. There had been a fairly large investment in presses for the body, so when Nash folded up, BMC decided they had better make an effort to sell the cars themselves. Besides exporting the little Metropolitans to America they also released them on the home market as well as in other parts of

the British none came a few which privately.

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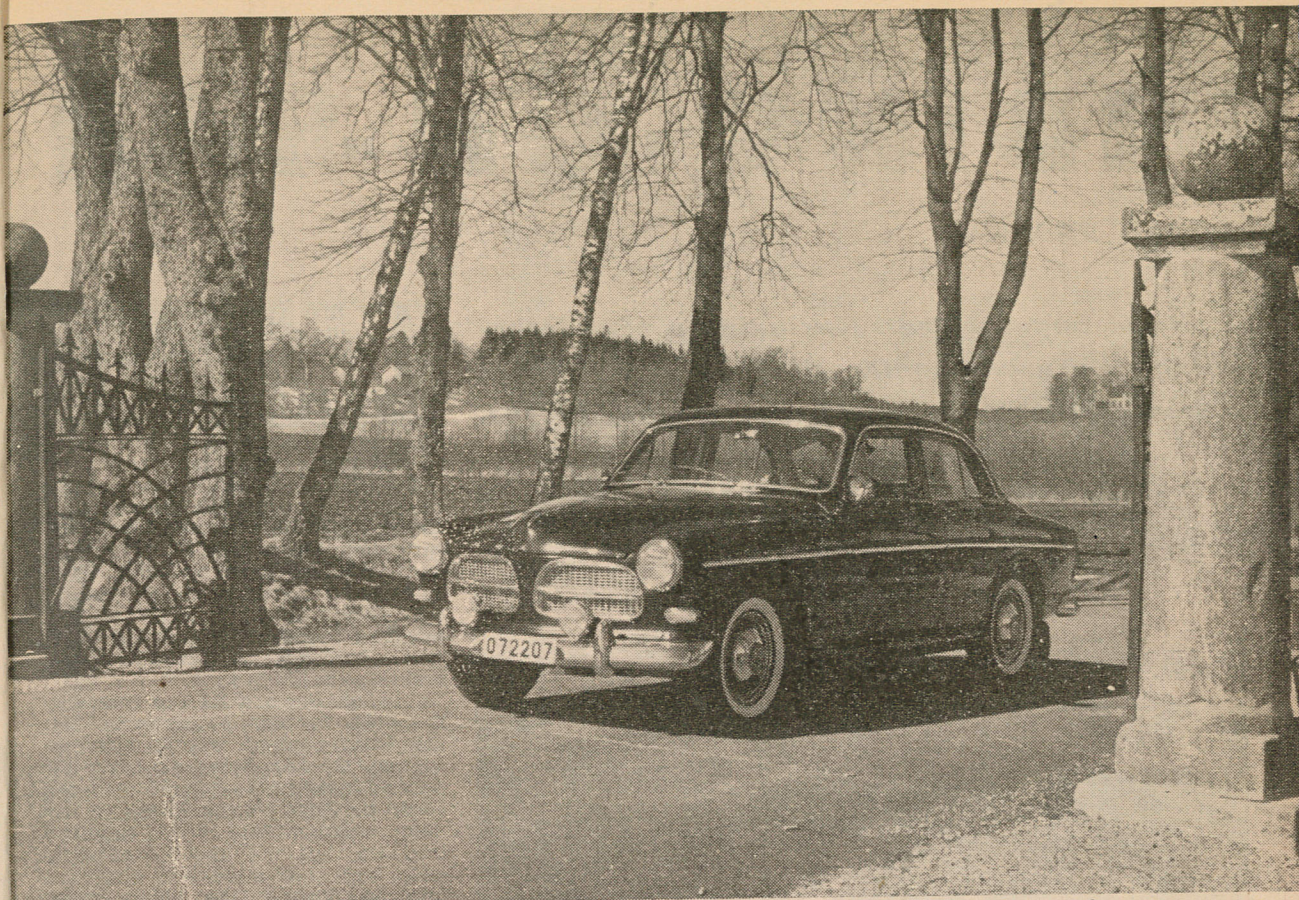
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Volvo Amazon cars may be sold here soon. A product of Sweden, they have as much performance as most sports cars. However, they will be expensive.

the British commonwealth. However, none came to Australia other than a few which entered into the country privately.

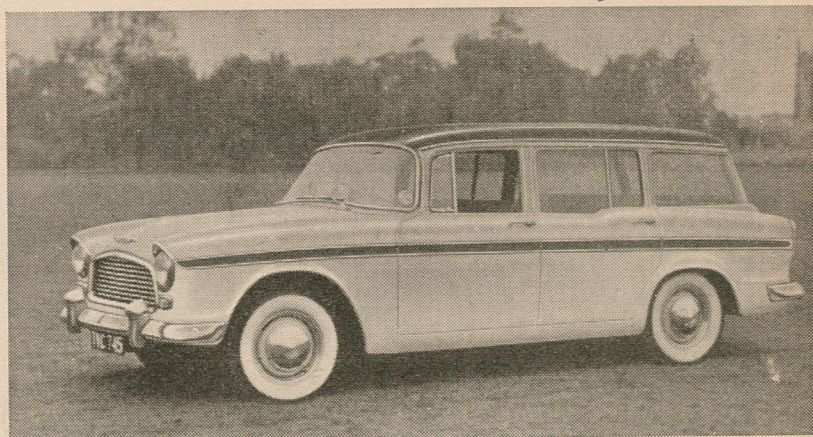
I don't think people regard the Scandinavian countries as being great industrial empires, but the fact remains that Sweden, for instance, makes two particularly good cars. One is the Volvo and the other is the SAAB.

The latter is the product of an aircraft company. Like the Auto Union and DKW, it has a water cooled, two stroke, three cylinder engine driving the front wheels. A small car, it has earned itself a major place in International rallies. In its GT form (the engine is hot, the body is standard) it will top 90 mph with relative ease.

We can expect to see the other Swedish car—the Volvo—in Australia some time in the not too distant future. Factory representatives have been investigating the possibility of marketing them here, so it is appropriate to see what kind of car they are.

The model which will probably come here is the Amazon 122S saloon, which is powered by a 1600 cc push-rod overhead valve, four cylinder engine. It drives the rear wheels. Attractive, it nevertheless looks rather conservative. The finish and workmanship are of a very high order.

Performance is about equal to an MG A — not bad for a four door



Although the Humber range of cars is a familiar sight in Australian roads, the station wagon versions are not put on sale here. This is the Hawk.

family saloon! The cost is not certain, but it will not be cheap. Between £1600 and £1850 is the popular educated guess.

Riley is a name which has died off the Australian scene. In England it is perpetuated by two models — the One-Point-Five and the 4/Sixty Eight. The latter is based on the familiar Farina shape. The former is very similar to the Wolseley 1500 (now an extinct species in Australian showrooms) except that it has a different radiator grille, more instruments and a twin carburettor engine.

There are huge numbers of mini-cars in Europe which will never come here and too numerous to mention. There are now agents in Australia for Ferrari and Maserati, so we can expect a few more of these cars to filter through in due course. Most of the important American cars are represented in some form or another and now that restrictions on products from America have been eased we may see a few more of them. Again the problem is that not many of them are made in right hand drive.

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